

Invitation and presentation of the informational meeting about the Department of Health's Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment efforts in the State of Hawaii held on May 7th, 2008

The Department of Health (DOH) has an ongoing obligation to evaluate the quality of our inland and marine waters. You are invited to attend an introductory meeting to learn about the latest phase of these Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment efforts and to begin enlisting participants for our Integrated Water Quality Reporting workgroup. **This public information meeting will be held at 1:00 PM on May 7th, 2008 in the 5th floor conference room of the DOH offices located at 919 Ala Moana Boulevard in Honolulu, Hawaii.**

In order to comply with the federal Clean Water Act and fulfill associated U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements, DOH is developing new methods for deciding if the uses protected by the State water quality standards (such as "protection of native breeding stock," "food processing," "compatible recreation," "conservation of coral reefs and wilderness areas"), as well as the water quality criteria and antidegradation policy in these standards, are actually attained in particular waters of the state (1). To help us develop these methods, **DOH is convening an Integrated Water Quality Reporting workgroup that we hope will bring together diverse expertise and experience necessary to upgrade our water quality evaluation toolbox. Our objective is to establish meaningful, yet simple methods to determine designated use attainment with limited data.** The workgroup's final work product will be a set of draft assessment decision criteria that will be proposed for use in the 2008 integrated water quality report. These draft criteria will then be subject to public review prior to being established as the official criteria.

After the introductory public information meeting, two workgroup meetings will be held at DOH offices on Oahu. The workgroup will be organized into topic-driven focus groups, for example, bioassessment or data management. Each focus group will be assigned to research specific topics, and report findings and recommendations to the workgroup. The workgroup will then prepare draft criteria for public review.

Attendance at the introductory public information meeting is not required in order to participate in the workgroup. The powerpoint presentation for this initial public meeting is available for viewing online at <http://hawaii.gov/health/environmental/env-planning/wqm/wqm.html>, and remote conferencing capability can be arranged for neighbor isle workgroup participants who cannot attend the workgroup meetings on Oahu.

Please pass on this invitation to anyone who may be interested in diligently and enthusiastically sharing their expertise. **For information and/or interest in participating in the workgroup please contact: Linda Koch, Environmental Planning Office at (808) 586-4349 or by email at linda.koch@doh.hawaii.gov.**

(1). In even numbered years, the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) submits the *State of Hawaii Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report: Integrated Report to Congress Pursuant to Sections 303(d) and 305(b) Clean Water Act (P.L. 97-117)* to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval. This report is a critical component of our regulatory and policy responsibilities as it identifies surface waters that are polluted. These impairment decisions are compiled using a set of criteria to evaluate whether the State surface waters are attaining their designated uses, water quality criteria, and the antidegradation policy as stated in the Hawaii Administrative Rule (HAR) Chapter 11-54.